

CHAP, xii INFLUENCE OF MOTHER-KIN ON
RELIGION 207

mlre, clad in a small apron that hardly hides her nakedness,, with a little mat on her back to protect her from the burning heat of the sun, and with a shade of banana leaves for her eyes. There, dripping with sweat in the burning sun and coated with mud to the hips and over the elbows, she toils to set the younger women a good example.

Moreover, as in every other occupation, the *kaliths*, the gods, must also be invoked, and who could be better fitted for the discharge of so important a duty than the Mother of the House ?" / It seems clear that in any agricultural people who, like the Pelew Islanders, retain mother-kin and depute the labours of husbandry to women, the conception of a great Mother Goddess, the divine source of all fertility, might easily originate. Perhaps the same social and industrial conditions may have combined to develop the great Mother Goddesses of Western Asia and Egypt.

But In the Pelew Islands women have yet another road Both men to power. For some of them are reputed to be the wives of ^{^th^0111611} gods, and act as their oracular mouthpieces. Such prophet- Pelew essess are called *Amlaheys*, and no surprise Is felt when one ^{attaj_n} to of them is brought to bed. Her child passes for the offspring ^{P^ower by} of the god, her divine husband, and goes about with his hair ^{as the*} hanging loose in token of his superhuman parentage. It Is ^{insPir^d} thought that no mortal man would dare to intrigue with one pieces of of these human wives of a god, since the jealous deity would ^{the} surely visit the rash culprit with deadly sickness and a lingering decline.² But in these islands men as well as women are often possessed by a deity and speak In

his name. Under his inspiration they mimic, often with great histrionic skill, the particular appearance and manner which are believed to be characteristic of the indwelling divinity. These inspired men (*Korongs*) usually enjoy great consideration and exert a powerful Influence over the whole community. They always acquire wealth In the exercise of their profession. When they are not themselves chiefs, they are treated as chiefs or even preferred to them. In not a few places the deity whom

¹ J. S. Kubary, *Ethnographische BeMriigd zur Kenntniss des Karolinen Archipels* (Leyden, 1895), P- 159- Oⁿ² J- Kubary, " Die Religion der importance of the taro or sweetPelauer," in A. Bastian's *Allerlei azts* potato as the staple food of the people, *Volks- und Menschenkiinde*, i. 34.